

EXPERTS OPINIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND POLEMICS

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Race for the highest martial arts grades, its glamour and shadows

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Abstract:

The aim of this article is to describe and evaluate clever striving for obtaining master grades. The procedure involves people, who do not comply with the ethical code and trample down *budō* - the traditional way of education. The content of this article is aimed to draw attention of martial arts teachers-masters who through breaching every established rule award themselves and others with high grades.

Such perception of competition in order to obtain the highest grades and titles diminishes the traditional way of behaviour; exposes bad practices and causes that real masters' community have to depend on people that were awarded with high grades accidentally. The fair play in martial arts for teachers and coaches within martial arts community relies on observance of tradition, conscience and high morality.

Introduction

The idea of writing this article stems from the huge need to introduce this cunning procedure adapted by some martial arts members. Their behaviour could be compared to sickness called pride. Pride caused a fall of more than one human being with a fatal result [Pawlucki 2011: 295]. I would like to highlight the fact that the article does not concern martial arts or martial sports masters that had obtained their grades rightfully. Those masters are able to confirm their grades and titles in every day life through their technical skills, knowledge, training experience and their moral and ethical attitude. They did not participate in cunning procedures that can be compared to sport competition, where the most important aim is to be awarded master grade called Dan, without gaining an appropriate level of knowledge or technical skills relevant to the award. I am quite sure that masters who gained their grades incorrectly may feel offended by this article. The purpose of this work is to invite all of them to re-consider the moral nature of the procedure, also to call for revetting of their technical skills. Only then they will be able to prove that their technical skills are comparable to the grade they hold.

The situation was analysed only in Poland and is subjected especially to national *jūjutsu* community so mainly Polish literature was introduced for the article to describe the scale of the problem. Adopted theoretical grounds stem from humanistic theory of martial arts, martial arts anthropology, general humanistic rules in physical education theory and theory of sports pedagogy. The issue of dishonest martial arts teachers and self-appointed martial arts masters had been noted by Wojciech Cynarski [2002, 2004, 2011, 2012a, b], who places the above categories of social facts and classifies them as moral crises and pathology. In his opinion they are caused by progress of extreme commercialisation, marital arts instructors' egoism and moving away from hallowed tradition. Obviously there are still a lot of martial arts institutions and organisation that comply with the traditional code what can be noted through ongoing application of ethical norms and system of values [cf. Hare 1981; Szyszko-Bohusz 2007; Obodynski, Cynarski, Witkowski 2008; Szmyd 2010; Cynarski 2012a, b].

The author of the article decided to touch on the subject he thinks plays a very important role. Taking into consideration such factors as his age, experience, positions he served, connections he has in martial arts community, the amount of presence

during international seminars, the observation he was able to gain through staying within martial arts and sports community, collecting documents and his general life experience; he thinks he is obliged to share his opinion.

Moral code or cunning way to self distinction

While striving for self distinction man can be trapped in a deception of psychological nature. The runner thinks he won a competition; however, he failed in terms of moral code. He probably never acknowledges the fact that morally he failed. "The moral man will never put himself to compete for fame to be the top of the class" [Pawłucki 2011: 295]. He will wait till his competence is acknowledged and recognized by other masters that offer to approve his knowledge and his skills and then he will be provided with a well-deserved dan certificate. Martial arts teachers should be rational and possess awareness of their own knowledge and technical skills. What is more, one should not always identify martial arts teacher with a person that holds a dan certificate. There are not many true martial arts teachers but a lot of "masters" wearing black belts. Those masters attempt to reach the top of the class, sometimes they already hold high master grades or very high technical grade certificates, identify others participants as losers, the incident that has its moral dimension. People who compete should experience each other within moral standards that are the original understanding of competition within martial arts [Pawłucki 2011: 296].

People who cooperate together while giving away technical grades so easily become ready to provide each other (including themselves) with high technical grades or high titles (without outside panel of referrers). It is a voluntary act that is caused by a sense of commitment to the partner.

Egocentric attitudes and desire to gain master grades at any price is distorted capture of facts by subjective way of thinking that might have been caused by the lack of self-trust, incorrect practices used by other masters or the assurance they will not be able to obtain high technical grades using generally accepted methods. Although they use different steps and courses to gain high grades they still believe in their "excellence", competence and ability. It can sometimes turn into a grotesque [Czajkowski 2011: 48-49]. In their action one can observe a lack of self criticism in relation to their own attitudes, shortfall in skills and effort as well as lack of acceptance for creative comments coming out from martial arts community.

Social relations of martial arts teachers-masters are self stimulated body of moral code that is able to assess the skills of individuals. Taking into account the nature of the organization, members of martial arts community try not to publicize or name those who do not comply with the code, however, try to express their opinions and attempt not to participate in meeting with them. Masters who do not deserve their grades also avoid any situation that might lead to the verification of their skills. There is a need for outside referees, similarly to sport competitions, while the grades are being awarded so effortlessly.

When standard norms to achieve a master grade are applied, it means that the candidate is competent and reached appropriate maturity [Cynarski 2004]. **Established traditional education system** acts as a referee and the person who obtains a master grade must reach the appropriate age; have reasonable length of training; hold approved technical skills within particular martial art; possess appropriate amount of knowledge and have impeccable moral and ethical attitude. One could ask, do we really need the outside referrer? Yes, there is a need for professional body that can provide a fair assessment. The next question of moral nature that might follow is whether masters who do not comply with moral and educational values or were not able to humanize their own way of thinking, deserve or whether they are able to play a role of the outside referee? For each of them the answer will differ, accordingly to their own moral abilities.

The role of training length is strongly emphasised while promoting for further grades in martial arts, it should serve education aims. Acquiring only a good level of fitness or technical perfection are not sufficient factors to gain higher masters grades. The assessment involves checking on emotional and intellectual maturity, factors that need time to develop [Cynarski 2004: 258]. Everyone who considers themselves as a martial arts and martial sports teacher as an instructor or a master should follow the hierarchically regulated way of *budō*.

According to Dr Krzysztof Kondratowicz *jūjutsu* code of ethic among others consist of faithful transmission of tradition, continuous aspiration to extensive perfection, fidelity to follow the ideal way and performance that will not harm martial arts [Kondratowicz 1991: 72-73]. These rules are universal and can be applied to all styles and different martial arts school. The rules have moral meaning and justification; most of national *jūjutsu* masters obtain their technical grades from *sōke* Kondratowicz. Representatives of different martial arts schools participated in seminars led by Kondratowicz. They were properly educated within

the code of ethical rules and received appropriate instructors qualifications. Respect to a teacher usually manifests in student's performance while for example a student follows the values that had been taught by the teacher. Continuous attempts to moral perfection express features permanently presented in martial arts philosophy and have their reflection in martial arts code of ethic. Those values should be amplified by an honour code and respect for master-teacher and should become a norm or moral order to be followed by all martial arts and martial sports masters, teachers or coaches.

Cunning actions and procedures in order to obtain master grades could be compared to a professional sport competition, a race for high grades and respected titles primacy. Normally, there should be a clear boundary between martial arts and sport disciplines. It seems that the hunger for a high grade blinded some of martial arts members who can not see that their way of thinking refers more and more to a sport competition. Sport exists beyond morality, the good or the wrong doing; it is conditioned by financial gain or any other form of success that is related to profit [Kosiewicz 2011: 33]. Martial arts teachers should not be influenced by public mood, financial profits or political situations. Such mental understanding of the competition that leads to obtaining the highest grades and titles diminishes traditional norms of behaviour, exposes the wrong practice performed by particular people and has no meaning in justification of moral and educational values. According to pseudo-masters business-like interpretation the main provision and absolute value in martial arts are awarded with high technical grades and honourable titles [Kosiewicz 2011: 35].

Master-teacher moral skills are treated as earlier acquired abilities on which we can rely in education and coaching process while fulfilling moral duties and obligation [De Tchorzewski 2010: 68]. For students, only appropriate transmission of moral knowledge and values can become a correct pattern to follow in future. Martial arts master-teacher should become a good quid that is able to explain to their students the intricate way of education. Moral attitude develop throughout student's life. If students are not presented to appropriate moral values while they develop, they will loose the chance to follow a good model that should have been provided by the master, so there is no one to educate them properly within the martial arts code. If this is a case, no one can expect to see those values are complied by adult remembers of martial arts community [cf. Zukowska, Zukowski 2010: 61].

Education system in martial arts expresses basic rules of traditional ethics involved in martial arts teaching role and according to those established

codes the way of obtaining master grades should be sincere. Well presented forms of appropriate behaviour do not mean the rules are followed by certain people; more important are their preferences within moral value system and respect to tradition as well as to heirs of the particular style. Well balanced conduct within martial arts engages the following virtues: self-restraint, moderation, good manners and respect. Provided that blind instinct, pride, desire to self-appreciation can lead a master to take a short cut to follow selfish and easier solutions; the way of traditional martial arts master is more difficult and its follower should be aware that self control, composure and respect to tradition are required and acknowledged principles.

Martial arts determine human being as a perfectionist whose attempts to become ideal means to progress in all physical, mental and moral aspects [cf. Zukowska, Zukowski 2010: 66]. In this particular depiction, the competition factor is only applied within individual.

Fair play within martial arts community relays on abiding the rules. It is not about doing what is good for me as an individual but it is about a set of rules formed by tradition, conscience and moral standards that should be noted and followed. The code is taught and passed on through particular martial arts school. It consists of moral particle of martial arts teachers, pupils and teacher's teachers. If students experience values like kindness, truth, respect to tradition, honesty during martial arts education and they are able to absorb them, they will attempt to follow the values in their own lives. However, if martial arts students experience other behaviour like race for high technical grades, trampling down tradition or omitting rules established in the code of ethic, they will follow exactly the same way as it had been shown to them by their own master or master' supporters. What is more, students may not only follow but even overrun their masters in those attempts [Zukowska, Zukowski 2010: 67].

Important message of the role of martial arts teachers in forming moral abilities of their students can only be successful when teacher's behaviour is a good example. The effectiveness of teaching the code, faith to principles, honesty and respect to tradition of martial arts heirs depends solely on teacher's moral and ethic abilities. If deep-rooted, ethic code will never be forgotten, if followed partly or just for show, it will be destroyed. Respect to all principles allows a teacher to become a real master and at the same time have strong foundation to build a master prestige [De Tchorzewski 2010: 21].

The way of obtaining students grades called 'kyū' ensures that everyone has a chance to

develop gradually their master technical skills and the highest grades (usually 3-5 dan) within a particular style. It is called a traditional form of progress and development, distinctive for budō, in which the most important aim is to pursue a mental championship namely full psychological and physical integration [Cynarski 2004: 214]. Due to devaluation of traditional way of granting high grades, that is observed recently, masters-teachers who were awarded a high technical grade inconsistent with the code, deliberately follow their own way, taking shortcuts.

Could we rate such black belts owners, who trample down old traditions of martial arts and sports, who respect only their own way to obtain grades, among martial arts teachers. Are they professionals, are they genuine? Are they brave enough to present themselves at true professionals' side and verify their skills and grades? What about their personality features that can be observed: is it knowledge, modesty, credibility, impeccable ethical and moral attitude or rather slyness, pride and attempts to take undeserved place on the top within the master community.

Quite often those masters criticise each other during mutual meeting when anonymous exchange of thoughts takes place, they judge others very light heartedly and make use of rumour. The same critics are unable to present themselves on a international stage with other martial arts experts. Each of them can feel free to attend and show their skills on both national and international seminars. After they present themselves there is a chance they will be accepted by the community and then willingly invited to share the knowledge. They "dress themselves" with high grades and titles with great ease. What they do not share, is usually very vital information. How long they have been practising the particular style? How old are they? Who graded them? What style do they represent?

Race for high grades and easy award release

Recently the generation of 'juvenile' *sōke* (young age and a short period of training) springs up like mushrooms within *jūjutsu* community. The traditional system of obtaining grades is trampled down by the way they behave. What is quite intriguing about the whole affair, they seem to note nothing reprehensible in their own conduct. They just focus on praising themselves and activate uncontrollable greed for high grades and titles. They also surround themselves with people who have similar way of thinking and happily accept sly way of gaining high grades and titles.

As a person with 50 years of experience in martial arts and sports, participant of numerous international seminars (including leadership), I must admit that the subject of gaining high grades in inconsistent with the code is highly criticised on international and national stage and what is more particular people are being named. Self-appointed masters, however, do not seem to worry about the fact that in such an elite community all experts know each other very well. For a good name and respect we have to work hard for all our life. It is very easy to lose it through choosing the short cuts.

The second reprehensible conduct that is noted within martial arts community involves awarding with master grades students who never practised a particular style of martial arts or sports; their practise period was quite short and they reached level of 4-3 *kyū*. The author of the article considers that in principle, grades up to 5 *dan* in martial arts should be only awarded after successful presentation of technical skills. In the author's view, the same applies to martial sports.

Previously, for example, to be able to take part in judo grade for 1 *dan*, a student must have gained enough points for winning a minimum amount of 60-70 sport competitions. Now, how is it possible that people who had never taken part in a judo competition or any other martial sports style were awarded master grade within the particular style? When it comes to judo, particular grades are awarded. There are grades for competitors, coaches (for results), referee merits, honorary titles for contribution to judo and awards for recreational attendance. There are judo organizations that grant masters grades in judo after successful technical examination, without participation in competitions. The author thinks that such a convenient way of gaining master grades clashes with the traditional way and honourable code of practice. The code rules are supposed to be compulsory in both, martial arts and martial sports. Is the code in force or not?

There is an option for those who do not poses the appropriate knowledge and technical skills, who did not have the chance to obtain their grades according to the traditional way, namely honourable grades that are less harmful in moral terms while granted in martial arts or martial sport styles. However, the author wants to introduce his own view (in contrary to commonly applied practices while awarding honourable grants) in terms of awarding honourable grades in martial arts and martial sport styles. In his opinion the most sensible solution to reward those with contribution in martial arts and martial sport styles would be a black belt diploma without the actual grade. Such a procedure in its nature will help to separate professionals and

experienced teachers from people who do not own technical skills within particular style of martial arts or martial sport styles.

The question in its root is quite interesting: what is the use of a dan grade diploma for someone who does not possess appropriate skills and is unaware of particular technical requirements? Do such people willingly wear the white outfit and participate in different seminars? Do they identify themselves with martial arts teachers and coaches' community?

On the one hand some of masters award high grades to those who do not have enough technical skills or to those who come from a different background with ease and comfort. What is interesting, at the same time, the same masters treat their own students differently by appraising them according to different rules. Those masters force their own students to work hard, in the sweat of their brows, teach them about morality and make them participate in grade exams when meanwhile the same teachers do not follow the traditional way of granting grades. Master, how do you think you are perceived in your student's eyes!? Why do you treat your own students so unfairly when outsiders are favoured, theirs skills are not assessed properly and you grant them with master grades so willingly!? It is necessary to make a quote: **"Fidelity to principles, respect to tradition depends on your attitude, precisely ethic, exactly on your own moral skills"** [Zukowska, Zukowski 2010: 67].

The way of your conduct has nothing to do with the code of ethic. On the contrary, your conduct forces martial arts and martial sports teachers to be dependant on people who obtain their master grades 'accidentally' and in the eyes of sport management clerks, possess knowledge and skills within particular martial arts or martial sports. As a result of above behaviour, that is contradictory to the ethical code system and traditional way of obtaining grades, those particular people also obtain right to give content-related opinion on martial arts and martial sports community members. Do you think that masters, who lack education within traditional ways, do not belong to *budō* family, who do not own appropriate technical skills to their grades, are able to assess properly martial arts teachers, martial sports coaches and other members of the martial arts community? The appropriate solution to solve the problem is to apply code of ethic in all aspects and equally for everyone.

The author of the article knows a number of martial arts practitioners who do not possess university degrees but their knowledge abundance and technical abilities would astound people who hold academic qualifications. While training our body, we activate and nourish our brain. The

physical activity supports, intensifies neuron connection, as well as improves chemical and hormonal aspects of brain function [Ważny 2009: 361]. Few decades of martial arts training not only allow technical perfection to grow or to develop muscle improvement but also our brain to progress within its cognitive functions. Motor activity in an advanced age can reduce the pace of aging as well as improve mental ability or at least helps to keep it at a good level. Intensive training of aging people not only reduces the fall of fitness but also contributes to periodic increase of physical efficiency, muscle strength and brain function. When martial arts masters perfect technical skills throughout their all lives, they not only provide their body with appropriate dose of physical activity but also the activity reduces aging process. Martial arts masters through continuing training do not allow their body to reduce their physical efficiency drastically, cause to stop atrophy to hundreds of neurons every day and stimulate new neuron connections which also improve functions that are responsible for abstract thinking.

To sum up that short consideration about physical values involved in martial arts training, it is worth mentioning that martial arts students have higher level of dopamine, serotonin and noradrenalin in their bodies. Dopamine is called a happiness hormone because it consists of prize function. Physical activity helps indirectly to be more attentive, stay calm and quiet, also it helps to be in a good mood [Ważny 2009: 360-363].

There is a specific atmosphere and spiritual bond among people who practise martial arts and martial sports. The most important moral task for all members is to follow the code. According to the traditional way of teaching martial arts the following requirements must be considered before the student is allowed to take the exam: moral and ethical attitude, the length of practising a particular style (experience), the age of student, date of last grading, knowledge and technical skills. For example, the requirements for 9th dan exam admission in traditional schools like Dai Nippon Butokukai or Takeda-ryu Moroto-ha are as follow: appropriate technical skills, 50 years of experience within a particular style and minimum age 60-65. To be able to obtain 10 dan you need to reach the age of 85.

Of course we need to consider different conditions when it comes to a European who practises martial arts, its development and the level of technical skills of particular people who are able to pass the knowledge to a younger generation. It will of course differ depending on each person. The author of the article accepts that masters who have

the experience of 40-50 years, possess knowledge and technical skills, are capable to teach a younger generation and share their opinions on martial arts.

In European history of *jūjutsu* there were cases when masters who were not even 50 at the time, were awarded 10th dan. Cases like that are very rare and can only take place when well known and respected masters of particular style, would justly award it (at least 2-3 masters). Only a few masters in Europe were granted such high grades. It is sometimes possible that someone under 50 is awarded 10th dan. However, if this is a case, it means that this particular person spent all their life studying the particular style, gained high technical skills, a lot of experience and knowledge and their morals are excellent. The author met 2 masters in Polish *jūjutsu* community, who might be granted such high grades while being 50. It is possible, especially for those, who possess *menkyō kaiden* licence, which confirms the owner holds a full knowledge of the system; both technical skills, knowledge and school secrets.

The next example of misunderstanding the principles within the code of ethic take place when people attempt to mix grades obtained within martial arts and treat them as awarded within martial sports. So called conveying grades should not take place and should be treated as misinterpretation of code. Most martial arts students recognise only grades that were obtained from their own masters who earn their respect. Also grades from different schools, especially when it comes to a big difference between martial arts and martial sports cannot be treated the same and should never be comparable but only identified by particular school. This principle comes from traditional way of teaching martial arts.

The content of the article describes reprehensible conduct of awarding high grades, at the same time, determines how to recognise a real master, identify a dilettante or creator of false certificates. Cynarski [2004: 178] points out that there are few genuine martial arts and sports masters.

Socialisation and value acquisition ability

Behavioural socialisation within martial arts community is a process, during which, the members learn how to live according to norms of the traditional system of education. Adherence to the rules is strongly connected to martial arts culture. Both martial arts norms and the culture relate to acquisition, not inherited aspects within martial arts community. Social behavioural transformation among martial arts masters do not cause educational changes directly; however, they can stimulate and change them to some extent indirectly. A new way

of obtaining high grades can give permission and encouragement for a different way of thinking that completely differs from the traditional way of obtaining dan grades. All of us have the right to become and be the way they wish. However, the aim of the martial arts master-teacher is to prepare their students how to recognise *budō* values that are accepted by most of us within our community. Bending already established values of *budō* and appointing a new way 'with short cuts' is completely unacceptable, it is a breach of principles that had been passed to us by numbers of master generations. It is a new situation, new vision, new perspective that seems to be more related to martial sports. Each of us exists within our own space, however, we cannot close up completely alone within our own space or within a of small group people that hold similar opinion. Individuals should cross their own boundary, but at the same time comply with already established martial arts value system. We should pursue to stay within martial arts community and care for others [Bielski 2012: 115]. Martial arts teacher whose aim is to show students the proper way can not update their skills outside *budō* community.

This was never an easy task to form appropriate moral attitudes, it is even more difficult for those who identify themselves with martial arts community but do not comply with community principles. However, the author thinks it is the highest time to speak up and raise issues considered and suggested by numerous masters, therefore he decided to write the article. Although most people who practise martial arts in Poland and Europe have no doubts there should be some kind of agreement in regard to general approved norms based on the traditional way, there are others who attempt to make correction and establish new rules within martial arts social behaviour that have no justification within the traditional way of *būdō* and therefore are unacceptable. Weak teachers that are capable of following only their own rules, whims and weaknesses, are unable to bear the responsibility for their own work, they had undertaken. Attempts to transform the old system of education and its norms can take place only while the change does not involve permanent ideas and values and it is build on appropriate and reasonable human model [O. Wojciak 2012: 86-87]. Good behaviour goes together with virtue, the virtue of faithfulness and bond to the traditional system of education. No one must breach the bonds or betray them in order to derive advantage.

There is no approval of the fast way to gain high grades among masters who respect traditional systems of education. Masters who obtained their

grades against the respected ways some kind of ambivalence can be observed. On the one hand they express bonds to the traditional way of education but on the other hand they pronounce their own values and follow their way of obtaining high grades. Their ambition towards 'sprinter way' to gain the highest grades changed into some sort of cynicism lack of respect for approved values. All those cause the respected *dan* institution to devaluate. Such behaviour requires verification and it can be done by applying the same norms of moral principles to everyone within martial arts community. Previous *jūjutsu* generations deserved it.

Is it worth and is it the appropriate time to start a coherent discussion about obtaining grades? Is it worth and is it the appropriate time to act on examples set in the traditional system? Of course, it is worth and the time is appropriate. The problem in Poland is increasing. We could call it the highest grades disease (only at the end of 2012 there were 16 people who claimed they are 10th dan holders). The best way to approach this 'epidemic issue' is to try to understand that the way of gaining high grades some masters applied leads to devaluation of already established norms. Mutual discussion on the national scale could make those who tread accordingly to their own ways, to be aware of the results (of their behaviour) which will be visible in a very short period of time. However, that action cannot become an order, the way we should treat it is to describe them as moral norm and respect to previous generations

Acquisition of facts, values, traditional principles within education and examination should be taught and acquired when students grow up. Only then the values will be understood and become the model to follow. The lack of understanding how important is to teach those values might be caused by various factors such as a bad example taken from their own lives (their high grades were obtained in a similar way from their own masters, lack of good example to follow), too short period of practising a particular style or practising the style with a very wide range of specialisations. This modern way of obtaining grades in such speed leads to acceptance of new norms and serves to build up 'super ego'. This idea is quite the opposite to the traditional system of martial arts code.

The sprinter community wants to create and establish a new system of martial arts values. If this is the case, they should think about creating their own martial art style and name it. Actions like that could allow them to create new norms how to be examined and obtain dan grade. The author would like to provide an example of German masters who properly interpreted *Budō* code and for some time

now have been introducing and building a new martial art style – Atemi Combat System (ACS). They are creating a new specialisation but their core skills were obtained in *jūjutsu*, self defence techniques and Anti Terrorkampf (ATK). Just like Mr Horst Weiland who created *Anti Terrorkampf* several decades ago [Slopecki 2006: 104-106]. The author has been a direct observer of ACS creation and his highest interest, above all, lays in ACS grading system and promotion for dan grades. The new system is being created under a control of World Combat Association; all requirements for high grades are formed on traditional martial arts code. A master who wants to obtain a dan grade in ACS style, has to start grading from 1st dan. Building ACS system is still in progress; new rules were introduced within a traditional code and its values that will retain forever.

Unfortunately, there is some kind of agreement and consent to shorten the way of obtaining grades on the national stage. Those masters recognise one another grades within their own group and at the same time accept the way those dan grades had been obtained. It is clear the incorrect procedure involves the highest dan owners (8, 9, and 10). How it can be checked? Everyone can search the Internet and check up particular masters and their number. Nobody can predict precisely how many high grades obtained in such way may appear future. It can be that we will observe another spring up of 10th dan owners in the near future. **Devaluation of dan grade** is progressing.

The most reasonable way out of this situation would be to initiate mutual meeting within martial arts community for those who obtained their grades in a similar incorrect way and mutual participation in *jūjutsu* seminar. There would be a chance to prove their skills in presence of outside referees (people who do not belong to their own group) and show to others that the grades and titles they use are well deserved. Leaving out the issue the way it is and without solving it through honourable act to comply with *jūjutsu* code [Kondratowicz 1991: 72-73] discredits credibility of grades that had been awarded. In the traditional system of awarding dan grade, the main devices to verify the examinee are: experience - the amount of years within *jūjutsu* training, age, impeccable ethical-moral attitude, knowledge and technical skills, and periods of time between grades. Two first requirements allow assessing credibility of an examinee and serving as opening gates to further consideration. *Jūjutsu* training experience according to European norms should be at least 45-50 years and the age of examinee should be 60. Those are minimum requirements that enable to participate in

grade for 10th dan. It should be compulsory within whole *jūjutsu* community and ought to apply to all masters. Most of those who hold such a high dan grade do not meet two first requirements. Japanese norms for martial arts grades in Europe are even more demanding and require further 10-20 years comparing to Japanese master counterparts.

It is necessary to remind all masters that the odd precedent of increasing grade scale up to 12th dan already took place in Poland. The odd behaviour of particular masters, that had no logical explanation, involved granting people with grades that were higher comparing to grades owned by the examiners themselves. Such an incident can occur only if the particular master already obtained a grade from 2-3 other masters holding higher grades than the examinee and another group of masters that represents different school or system express their acceptance to previous decision by signing the document. In practice this incident means that the last group of masters acknowledged the grade that had been granted earlier (it is not necessary but possible). To be able to obtain 10th dan there should be 2-3 masters who already hold that grade and who will sign the certificate after successful examination.

Mikonosuke Kawaishi did not expect such incidents. He created a particular technical level system and attributed every level to a particular colour of belt for *jūjutsu* and self defence use that had been taught at that time. It was necessary for European who practised self defence to confirm their technical skills. At that time Kawaishi did not expect that in future some martial arts masters will want to extend earlier established and adapted by most martial arts masters scale of 10th dan to 12th.

Conclusion

Self-imposed content of the article draws attention to the significant issue which is granting black belts to different representatives of martial arts and sports community as well as people from outside the community. The article touches on the most important education side of martial arts: moral abilities of teachers, coaches – by describing the way the highest grades and titles are obtained. The way of awarding grades has its different sides, better and worse. Those unacceptable are as follows: providing with high honourable dan grades (6th-10th dan) people who have an inadequate training period, did not reach appropriate age, have not acquired enough life and professional experience. They are so full of pride that they are unable to assess their moral or ethic abilities.

The second reprehensible ailment characteristic feature of some masters is providing with black belts people who have never practised a particular style or their skills are average (4-3 *kyū*). Awarding them with dan grades serves as a means to prize them or highlight their professional position. Those people are never keen to show their technical skills even if they attend different seminars. The grades have been undeserved and obtained without checking their technical skills, opposite to the traditional system of examination. As they hold 'valid' certificates they are recognised as martial arts and sports experts that are competent and able to assess the knowledge and skills of others who have been practising martial arts and sports for years. This issue is very important because of its moral nature, they lack technical skill, their grades were obtained by short cuts, and credibility of those people is very fragile.

The author did not meet anyone, who could acquire martial arts or sports skills through studying it from books or after theoretical discussion. If this is a case, a moral way of proving it could be through providing with theoretical explanation and verifying the theory through showing their practical skills in *dōjō*. This would be an attempt to confirm that their knowledge and technical skills are adequate to their grade and that their theory is based on technical abilities. Such an act would be an honourable solution for them.

The third unacceptable practice within martial arts and sports that takes place is mixing grades within those two such different areas of physical activity. Grades are often exchanged within those two aeries which serve to obtain higher grades. *Dan* and *kyū* requirements within technical skills and grades in martial arts should differ to those in martial sports. Those facts stem from knowledge within martial arts and sports area, respect to tradition and masters generations and from self respect (skill that enable to asses your own abilities).

The aim of the article is to describe the problem and make sure that all martial arts and sports teachers are aware, how, the lack of abiding the code, while it comes to *dan* grading, may harm martial arts community. Unacceptable acts that are performed within the community, described in the article, will result in a negative effect that will be noticeable. The author questioned those who do not comply with the traditional code whether they have right to call themselves martial arts or martial sports master teachers?

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Blaski i cienie biegu po najwyższe stopnie mistrzowskie

Słowa kluczowe: sztuki walki, *jūjutsu*, bieg po stopnie mistrzowskie, kodeks etyczny

Streszczenie

W artykule tym autor przedstawia problem natury etycznej związany z nieprzezwyciężaniem tradycyjnego sposobu zdobywania stopni mistrzowskich, jaki ma miejsce w sportach i sztukach walki. Na przykładzie krajowych mistrzów *jūjutsu* przedstawiony jest opis łamania zasad kodeksu etycznego, dotyczących przyznawaniu stopni mistrzowskich *dan*. Opis i diagnoza sprytnego zabiegu zdobywania stopni *dan* ma na celu uświadomienie wszystkim osobom, które biorą w tym udział, że postępują one niezgodnie z tradycyjnym systemem edukacyjnym, łamią przyjęte zasady, nie respektują dziedzictwa poprzedników i ustalają własne normy. Analizie poddana jest sytuacja w Polsce - zwłaszcza mistrzów uprawiających sztukę walki *jūjutsu*, ale też w jakiejś mierze treści artykułu dotyczą sytuacji występującej podobnie w innych sportach i sztukach walki. Zdaniem autora, temat ten jest bardzo ważny, dotycząc obecnej sytuacji, jaka ma miejsce w krajowym środowisku mistrzów *jūjutsu*. Do tego rodzaju diagnozy i krytyki nagannych praktyk (natury etycznej) upoważnia autora wiek, staż treningowy, znajomość środowiska krajowego i zagranicznego, odbyte staże, oraz doświadczenie życiowe. Na podstawie pięćdziesięcioletniego praktykowania *jūjutsu*, obserwacji środowiska mistrzów, stawia on hipotezę, że wyższą wartość dla tych osób ma certyfikat na stopień *dan*, niż legitymacja upoważniająca do wykonywania zawodu instruktora lub trenera.

Praca koncentruje się na analizie nagannych sposobów zdobywania stopni mistrzowskich, które nie mają nic wspólnego z tradycyjnym systemem edukacji w sztukach walki. Opisując powyższe działania dość licznej grupy krajowych mistrzów, autor podważa wiarygodność tych poczynań, poddaje je krytyce z punktu widzenia tradycji, kodeksu etycznego i moralności. Ukazany jest naganny wybieg przyznawania sobie stopni *dan* w sposób „organizacyjny”, czyli mistrzowie posiadający niższy stopień podpisują się pod stopniem wyższym w celu wypromowania swojego kolegi.

W przypadku standardowym, zdobywanie stopni mistrzowskich jest efektem uzyskania przez kandydata odpowiednich kompetencji i stwierdzeniem jego dojrzałości. W tym wypadku sędzią jest ustalony tradycyjny system edukacji

(wiek osiągnięty przez osobę ćwiczącą, staż treningu w danej sztuce walki, umiejętności techniczne, wiedza, nienaganna postawa etyczno-moralna). Takie sytuacje mogą zaistnieć wtedy, kiedy mają one mocne uzasadnienie merytoryczne, i gdy pod tym faktem podpisują się autorytety danego stylu czy metody (dwie lub trzy osoby), jako sędziowie zewnętrzni. Można postawić pytanie, czy sędzia zewnętrzny jest potrzebny? Tak, potrzebny jest w tej sytuacji, gdyż może osądzać sprawy w sposób sprawiedliwy i profesjonalny. Można zadać sobie istotne pytanie natury moralnej. Czy środowisko mistrzów nieprzestrzegające wartości wychowawczo-moralnych, które nie potrafiło samo siebie humanizować, zasługuje na opinię sędziego zewnętrznego? Odpowiedź na to pytanie leży po stronie sprawności moralnej każdej z tych osób.

Rola stażu treningowego oraz wiek uzyskany przez kandydata powinny być silnie akcentowane w promocji na następne stopnie, co służy celom wychowawczym. Sama sprawność w walce i perfekcja techniczna nie wystarczą do promocji na wyższe stopnie mistrzowskie. Ocenia się dojrzałość emocjonalną i intelektualną, których osiągnięcie wymaga odpowiedniego czasu. Każdy, kto uważa się za nauczyciela, mistrza, trenera sztuk i sportów walki, powinien budować hierarchiczny porządek drogi *budō*.

Treści artykułu zwracają uwagę na deptanie kodeksu etycznego przez opisane praktyki, gdy głód stopni przesłonił niektórym osobom świadomość i rozumienie drogi *budō*. Ich punkt widzenia i sposób postępowania nawiązuje do rywalizacji sportowej; jest uwarunkowany zyskiem finansowym oraz innymi formami potwierdzenia sukcesu. Środowisko nauczycieli sztuk walki nie powinno ulegać presji społecznej, finansowej czy politycznej. W ten sposób pojmowana przez niektórych mistrzów rywalizacja o najwyższe stopnie i tytuły degraduje tradycyjne normy zachowań, obnaża złe praktyki poszczególnych osób niemające żadnego uzasadnienia natury wychowawczej. Tylko w sposób właściwy dla drogi *budō*, przekazywanie uczniom wiedzy i wartości moralnych może być dla nich odpowiednim wzorem. W sztukach walki system edukacji wyraża podstawowe zasady tradycyjnej etykiety zawodu nauczyciela, z której wynika postulat czystej drogi dochodzenia do stopni mistrzowskich, według przyjętych tradycyjnych reguł edukacji. O przestrzeganiu tych reguł nie decydują tylko zewnętrzne formy zachowań poszczególnych osób, ale preferowany przez nich system wartości moralnych, odpowiedni szacunek do tradycji i poprzedników – mistrzów danego stylu.

Autor udziela licznych wskazówek etyczno-wychowawczych dotyczących tego zagadnienia. Jeżeli uczeń w swoim procesie edukacji zetknie się z wartościami, np. dobra, prawdy, szacunku do tradycji, uczciwości, i je zinternalizuje, to będzie się starał,

aby jego postępowanie w różnych sytuacjach życiowych było z nimi zgodne. Kiedy uczeń patrząc na postępowanie swojego mistrza, czy na grono jego popleczników, zetknie się z nieuzasadnionym pędem po stopnie mistrzowskie, z deptaniem tradycji i omijaniem kodeksu etycznego u mistrza, w podobny sposób będzie sam postępował, bądź w swoich dążeniach (w sposób podobny) prześcignie swojego mistrza.

W opisie sprytnych zabiegów przyznawania stopni mistrzowskich zwrócona jest uwaga na niebezpieczeństwo uznania ich za pewną normę społeczną w promowaniu na stopnie mistrzowskie. Socjalizacja tych nowych zachowań jest procesem rozłożonym w czasie. Przemiany niewskazanych zachowań społecznych w środowisku mistrzów sztuk walki mogą w jakiejś mierze stymulować i wpływać nagannie na zmiany systemu edukacyjnego. Nowa droga zdobywania stopni mistrzowskich może dawać impuls i przyzwolenie do innego sposobu myślenia różniącego się diametralnie od tradycyjnej drogi zdobywania stopni. Należy przypomnieć w środowisku mistrzów *jūjutsu*, że w Polsce miał miejsce dziwny precedens podwyższenia skali stopni w *jūjutsu* do 12 dan. Dziwne zachowania poszczególnych mistrzów, niemające logicznego uzasadnienia, polegały na przyznawaniu stopni do poziomu wyższego niż sami wówczas posiadali.

Autor w artykule tym zadaje istotne pytania, czy warto jest i czy właściwy jest czas, aby podjąć na ten temat logiczny dyskurs i oprzeć swoje działania na egzemplifikacji tradycyjnego systemu nadawania stopni? W sposób świadomy sam odpowiada, że warto, ponieważ opisane zjawisko wzmaga się z roku na rok w naszym kraju; można go nazwać epidemią najwyższych stopni *dan* (pod koniec roku 2013 przyznaje się do tego stopnia szesnastu mistrzów *jūjutsu*). Najlepszym sposobem na opanowanie tej choroby byłoby zrozumienie przez te osoby, że przedstawiona sytuacja może doprowadzić do dewaluacji wyznaczonych norm. Wspólny dyskurs na forum krajowym mistrzów *jūjutsu* mógłby uzmysłowić poszczególnym osobom, że ich naganne działania mogą w krótkim czasie obniżyć wartość i rangę najwyższych stopni mistrzowskich. W działaniach tych nie powinno wprowadzać się imperatywu; można go tylko ująć, jako normę moralną i formę szacunku dla minionych pokoleń mistrzów.

Jest to jednocześnie próba uświadomienia mistrzom sztuk i sportów walki, jakie szkody przynosi temu środowisku nieprzestrzeganie kodeksu etycznego w sprawach nadawania stopni mistrzowskich *dan*. Opisane naganne praktyki mogą spowodować negatywne skutki dla całego środowiska sztuk i sportów walki. Autor stawia stosowne pytanie, **czy osoby, które w ten sposób postępują, mogą się tytułować mianem mistrza, nauczyciela sportów i sztuk walki?**